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Orrick Hunts Trouble in State Department

By JOHN P. LEACACOS
Plain Dealer Bureau

WASHINGTON — The Kennedy administration, a year and half after it took office, is preparing "to do something" about the State Department.

The man now plunging into the thankless job is a 37-year-old Californian and Yale man, William H. Orrick Jr. He was picked from his post as assistant attorney general in charge of the Justice Department's biggest bailiwick, the civil division.

A protege of Atty. Gen. Robert Kennedy and of the most persistent critics of the State Department, Orrick at last has a head start on his predecessor, Roger W. Jones, an eminent civil servant. Orrick is an "insider" with direct access to the President's ear, if necessary.

Orrick is pal of Secretary of State Dean Rusk from pre-war days when they pitched pennies together between classes at the University of California law school.

THE NEW DEPUTY under-secretary of state for administration has been a quick learner of three prime lessons since he was sworn in July 5:

- The State Department is the nation's No. 1 scapegoat, both for Congress and public. Everybody blames it when affairs go wrong in the world, and the department has no constituency to fight back for it.

- President Kennedy wants the State Department to modernize for the new era of a world smaller because of the speed of communications but vastly more complex because of new national diversities. The President demands "action, speed, judgment and ideas," as he recently told the American Foreign Service Association.



William H. Orrick Jr.

- Morale of the foreign service, the elite professional corps of some 3,750 officers who are the front-line diplomats of the nation, has been considerably injured under the Kennedy administration as a result of considerable free-wheeling by White House aides in the first few months and the President's own early habits of darting in and out of the lines of command via direct phone calls and consultations.

ORRICK has moved swiftly, efficiently and amiably to reassure the "pros," to ask modestly the right questions and to cut through bureaucratic layers of fat to get the answers.

State Department sources say Orrick has two months to feel his way around, but really needs two years to find out the intricacies of what makes the vast department, the senior or one of the executive branch, operate.

Orrick's first moves, in any event, have impressed the diplomatic cynics in the department.

He has made Assistant Secretary of State for Administration William J. Crockett his deputy.

FOUR OTHER deputy assistant secretaries of state—personnel, management, operations, budget and finance—likewise are moving onto the seventh or top-executive floor of the State Department to be on tap, instead of spread all over.

Orrick is expected to augment and accelerate the trend initiated by Crockett of giving the assistant secretaries of state in charge geographical areas—Far East, Middle East, Europe, Africa, Latin America, etc.—far greater autonomy. In effect, they will be "junior" secretaries of state for their parts of the world, not only for policy but for selection and assignment of personnel, logistics and finance.

The most hopeful idea Orrick has met in his brief tenure has been the proposal to organize the operating echelons of the State Department into "country teams." These would be counterparts here to the embassy staffs of particular countries overseas.

THE HOPE IS that the Washington end would coordinate all the relevant agencies of the capital—Defense, State, USA, Treasury—into one integrated plan which would facilitate the job of the men in the field.

Long-range proposals for reorganization of the State Department for the age of space and multi-nationalisms in the next decade are under study by a committee headed by former Secretary of State Christian A. Herter.

The committee will report about Dec. 1 to Secretary Rusk, who likes to say that "administration is the hand-maiden of foreign policy." Rusk has been too busy with world crisis to do much about the problem himself, however.

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